

Chapter 5

Counseling and Mentorship



We have the best doctrine, the best training and the best equipment in the world – but our people are the Army’s greatest resource

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For more information on Counseling and Mentorship see FM 6-22 (22-100) *Army Leadership*, Appendix C, Counseling; The Army Leadership Homepage, www.leadership.army.mil; and the Army Counseling Homepage, www.counseling.army.mil.

For more information on the NCO Evaluation System, see AR 623-205, “Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Reporting System,” 15 May 2002.

For more information on mentorship, see DA PAM 600-XX, “Army Mentorship,” TBP.

5-1. At the time of the American Revolution, European armies were held together by the most severe discipline. Enlistments in Europe and England were often as long as twenty-five years, pay was very low and punishments were cruel by today's standards. To reduce desertion and motivate troops for battle, the threat of flogging, even death, was held over soldier's heads. Frederick the Great of Prussia set the tone of the period with his view that soldiers should be more afraid of their NCOs than the enemy. From the founding of the Continental Army, the European tradition of harsh discipline was rejected. Friedrich von Steuben, the Army's first trainer and himself a product of the old Prussian tradition, quickly came to understand that it would take more than threats to get American recruits to perform well on the battlefield. General George Washington agreed and together, both leaders recognized that the American soldier was an individual citizen, not an interchangeable commodity. Citizen-soldiers would have to be led, inspired and disciplined by reason, creating the need to counsel.

5-2. To best understand the value of counseling it is best to first understand its definition. Counseling is a type of communication that leaders use to empower soldiers to achieve goals. It is much more than providing feedback or direction. It is communication aimed at developing a soldier's ability to achieve individual and unit goals. Soldiers want to be counseled and will respond to counseling because they want to know what it takes to be successful in today's Army. Regardless of your leadership position, your soldiers see you as successful simply because you have achieved the level they are striving to accomplish. Leaders must provide each of their soldiers with the best possible road map to success. Today's leadership doctrine incorporates this definition in subordinate-centered communication, which leads to the achievement of individual and unit goals.

LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

5-3. Today's Army demands effective counseling. Due to the complexity of equipment, diversity of personnel and organizational structure, we have unique challenges. To overcome these problems, a leader has talent, experience and the desire to succeed. Leaders help soldiers solve their problems by guiding them to a workable solution through effective counseling. Counseling is so important it should be on the training schedule to ensure sufficient time is available to do it.

5-4. The Army's values of Loyalty, Duty and Selfless Service require us to counsel. The Army's values of Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage also require us to give straightforward feedback and the Army's value of Respect requires us to find the best way to communicate that feedback.

5-5. Leaders conduct counseling to develop soldiers to achieve personal, professional development and organizational goals, and to prepare them for increased responsibilities. Leaders are responsible for developing their soldiers. Unit readiness and mission accomplishment depend on every member's ability to perform to established standards. Supervisors must develop their subordinates through teaching, coaching and counseling. Leaders coach soldiers the same way any sports coach improves their team: by identifying weaknesses, setting goals, developing and implementing a plan of action and providing oversight and motivation throughout the process. To be effective coaches, leaders must thoroughly understand the strengths, weaknesses and professional goals of their soldiers.

"In developmental counseling, it's a matter of sitting the soldier down and telling him not only how well he did over the last thirty days, but also of telling the soldier how he or she can improve their performance and then looking deeper down the road."

CSM Anthony Williams

5-6. Leaders counsel because it is their duty and the primary tool in developing future leaders. For their counseling to be effective they must be honest and have the personal courage to give straightforward feedback. Through respect for the individual, leaders find the best way to communicate that guidance. Senior NCOs should develop the counseling skills of their subordinate leaders. One way to do this is for the senior NCO to sit in on a counseling session, perhaps a reception and integration counseling, and then do an AAR with the junior NCO.

- Purpose: Clearly define the purpose of the counseling.
- Flexibility: Fit the counseling style to the character of each soldier and to the relationship desired.
- Respect: View soldiers as unique, complex individuals, each with their own sets of values, beliefs and attitudes.
- Communication: Establish open, two-way communication with soldiers using spoken language, nonverbal actions, gestures and body language. Effective counselors listen more than they speak.
- Support: Encourage soldiers through actions while guiding them through their problems.
- Motivation: Get every soldier to actively participate in counseling and understand its value.

Figure 5-1. Characteristics of Effective Counseling

5-7. Some soldiers may perceive counseling as an adverse action. Effective leaders who counsel properly and regularly can change that perception. Leaders conduct counseling to help soldiers become better members of the

team, maintain or improve performance and prepare for the future. No easy answers exist for exactly what to do in all leadership and counseling situations. However, to conduct effective counseling, leaders should develop a counseling style with the characteristics listed in Figure 5-1.

“You also must ensure the session is not done in a threatening manner. Nothing will destroy communications faster than if the soldier thinks there will be negative consequences to that conversation.”

CSM Daniel E. Wright

EFFECTIVE ARMY COUNSELING PROGRAM

5-8. Four elements are essential to the creation of an effective counseling program:

- **Education and Training:** Institutional and in units, through mentorship and self-development. The Army must first provide a base line of education to its soldiers to “show what right looks like.” The Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) has the primary responsibility to educate the NCO Corps on counseling. However, NCOES cannot accomplish this alone. Unit NCO Development Programs can and must conduct training workshops to provide that base of education of what right looks like to our junior leaders.
- **Experience:** Learn by doing coupled with guidance from more senior leaders. After initial education and training, all leaders must put their skills to use. NCOs must practice counseling while at the same time receiving guidance and mentoring on how to improve counseling techniques.
- **Continued support from both the Army and leaders:** The Army’s Counseling Website (www.counseling.army.mil), FM 6-22 (22-100), Appendix B and C and leaders (through spot checks and random monitoring of counseling sessions) provide the necessary support and critiques that will improve a young leader’s counseling skills.
- **Enforcement:** Once NCOs have the tools (both education and support) necessary for quality counseling, leaders must hold them accountable to ensure acceptable counseling standards for both frequency and content. This is accomplished through some type of compliance program on unit inspections.

THE COUNSELING PROCESS

5-9. Effective leaders use the counseling process. It consists of four stages:

- Identify the need for counseling.
- Prepare for counseling.
- Conduct counseling.
- Follow-up.

“Listen to what soldiers have to say- they’ll tell you everything if you listen openly. Criticize and they’ll clam up. Ask what isn’t working about programs even if company statistics indicate that they are running well. Soldier comments often provide insight into ways to improve things to save time and make things more meaningful.”

COL David Reaney

<p>Leaders must demonstrate certain qualities to counsel effectively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for soldiers. • Self and cultural awareness. • Credibility. • Empathy. <p>Leaders must possess certain counseling skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active listening. • Responding. • Questioning. <p>Effective leaders avoid common counseling mistakes. Leaders should avoid the influence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal bias. • Rash judgments. • Stereotyping. • The loss of emotional control. • Inflexible methods of counseling. • Improper follow-up. 	<p>The Counseling Process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the need for counseling. 2. Prepare for counseling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a suitable place. • Schedule the time. • Notify the counselee well in advance. • Organize information. • Outline the components of the counseling session. • Plan counseling strategy. 3. Conduct the counseling session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the right atmosphere. • Open the session. • Discuss the issue. • Develop a plan of action (to include the leader’s responsibilities). • Record and Close the session. 4. Follow-up. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Plan of Action Implementation. • Assess Plan of Action.
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Figure 5-2. Major Aspects of Counseling Process

ASSESS THE PLAN OF ACTION

5-10. The purpose of counseling is to develop soldiers who are better able to achieve personal, professional and organizational goals. During the assessment, review the plan of action with the soldier to determine if the desired results were achieved. The leader and soldier should schedule future follow-up counseling sessions. Figure 5-2 summarizes the major aspects of the counseling process. Additional information on counseling is in Appendix C of FM 6-22 (22-100) and on the Army Counseling Homepage (www.counseling.army.mil).

“Nothing will ever replace one person looking another in the eyes and telling the soldier his strengths and weaknesses. [Counseling] charts a path to success and diverts soldiers from heading down the wrong road.”

SGM Randolph S. Hollingsworth

TYPES OF DEVELOPMENTAL COUNSELING

5-11. You can often categorize developmental counseling based on the topic of the session. The two major categories of counseling are event-oriented and performance and professional growth.

EVENT-ORIENTED COUNSELING

5-12. Event-oriented counseling involves a specific event or situation. It may precede events, such as going to a promotion board or attending a school; or it may follow events, such as a noteworthy duty performance, a problem with performance or mission accomplishment, or a personal problem. Examples of event-oriented counseling include, but are not limited to these types:

- Specific instances of superior or substandard performance.
- Reception and integration counseling.
- Crisis counseling.
- Referral counseling.
- Promotion counseling.
- Separation counseling.

COUNSELING FOR SPECIFIC INSTANCES

5-13. Sometimes counseling is tied to specific instances of superior or substandard duty performance. For example, you tell your soldier whether or not the performance met the standard and what the soldier did right or wrong. The key to successful counseling for specific performance is to conduct the counseling session as close to the time of the event as possible.

5-14. When counseling a soldier for specific performance take the following actions:

- Tell the soldier the purpose of the counseling, what was expected and how they failed to meet the standard.
- Address the specific unacceptable behavior or action, not the person's character.
- Tell the soldier the effect of the performance on the rest of the unit.
- Actively listen to the soldier's response.
- Remain unemotional.
- Teach the soldier how to meet the standard.
- Be prepared to do some personal counseling since the lack of performance may be related to or the result of a personal problem.
- Explain to the soldier what will be done to improve performance (plan of action). Identify your responsibilities in implementing the plan of action.
- Continue to assess and follow-up on the soldier's progress. Adjust the plan of action as necessary.

Reception and Integration Counseling

5-15. Leaders must counsel new team members when they report in. Reception and integration counseling serves two purposes: First, it identifies and helps fix any problems or concerns that new members have, especially any issues resulting from the new duty assignment. Second, it lets them know the unit standards and how they fit into the team. Reception and integration counseling starts the team building process and lets the soldier know the leadership cares. Reception and integration counseling clarifies job titles and it sends the message that the chain of command cares. Reception and integration counseling should begin immediately upon arrival so new team members can quickly become integrated into the organization. Figure 5-3 gives some possible discussion points.



- Unit standards.
- Chain of command.
- NCO support channel (who and how used).
- On and off duty conduct.
- Personnel/personal affairs/initial clothing issue.
- Unit history, organization and mission.
- Soldier programs within the unit, such as soldier of the month/quarter/year and Audie Murphy and Sergeant Morales Board.
- Off limits and danger areas.
- Functions and locations of support activities.
- On and off post recreational, educational, cultural and historical opportunities.
- Foreign nation or host nation orientation.
- Other areas the individual should be aware of, as determined by the rater.

Figure 5-3. Reception and Integration Counseling Points

Crisis Counseling

5-16. You may conduct crisis counseling to get a soldier through the initial shock after receiving negative news, such as notification of the death of a loved one. You help the soldier by listening and providing assistance, as appropriate. Assistance may include referring the soldier to a support activity or coordinating external agency support. Crisis counseling focuses on the soldier's immediate, short-term needs.

Referral Counseling

5-17. Referral counseling helps soldiers work through a personal situation and may follow crisis counseling. Referral counseling also acts as preventative counseling before the situation becomes a problem. Usually, the leader assists the soldier in identifying the problem.

5-18. Outside agencies can help leaders resolve problems. Although it is generally in an individual's best interest to seek help first from his first line leader, leaders must always respect an individual's right to contact these agencies on their own. Leaders can refer the soldier to the appropriate resource, such as Army Community Services, a Chaplain, or a substance abuse counselor. Additional information on support activities can be found in Appendix B, Army Programs or in FM 6-22 (22-100), Appendix C.

[Helping] soldiers cope with personal problems...means more than referring the soldier to another person- the chaplain, a doctor, or counselor. Until the problem is resolved, you have a soldier with a problem in your unit, so it's your problem.... Let your soldiers know what you're doing to help them solve their problems.

FM 22-600-20, *The Army Noncommissioned Officer Guide*, 1980

Promotion Counseling

5-19. Commanders or their designated representatives must conduct promotion counseling for all specialists, corporals and sergeants who are eligible for advancement without waiver, but are not recommended for promotion to the next higher grade. Army regulations require that soldiers within this category receive initial (event-oriented) counseling when they attain full eligibility and then periodic (performance and personal growth) counseling at least quarterly.

Adverse Separation Counseling

5-20. Adverse separation counseling may involve informing the soldier of the administrative actions available to the commander in the event substandard performance continues and of the consequences associated with those administrative actions. (See AR 635-200, Chapter 1, paragraph 1-16 and Chapter 17.)

5-21. Developmental counseling may not apply when a soldier has engaged in more serious acts of misconduct. In those situations, the leader should refer the matter to the commander and the servicing staff judge advocate's office. When the leader's rehabilitative efforts fail, counseling with a view towards separation fills an administrative prerequisite to many administrative discharges and serves as a final warning to the soldier to improve performance or face discharge. In many cases, it may be beneficial to involve the chain of command as soon as you determine that adverse separation counseling might be required. The first sergeant or commander should inform the soldier of the notification requirements outlined in AR 635-200.

PERFORMANCE AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH COUNSELING

Performance Counseling

5-22. During performance counseling, the leader conducts a review of the soldier's duty performance during the previous quarter. The leader and soldier jointly establish performance objectives and standards for the next quarter. Rather than dwelling on the past, leaders should focus the session on the soldier's strengths, areas needing improvement and potential.

Performance counseling informs soldiers about their jobs and the expected performance standards and provides feedback on actual performance -- the best

counseling is always looking forward. It does not dwell on the past and what was done, rather on the future and what can be done better.

DA Pam 623-205, "The NCO Evaluation Reporting System 'In Brief,'" 1988

5-23. Performance counseling is required for noncommissioned officers; mandatory, face-to-face performance counseling between the rater and the rated NCO is required under the NCOER system.

5-24. Performance counseling at the beginning of and during the evaluation period facilitates a soldier's involvement in the evaluation process. Performance counseling communicates standards and is an opportunity for leaders to establish and clarify the expected values, attributes, skills and actions.

5-25. As an Army leader, you must ensure you've tied your expectations to performance objectives and appropriate standards. **You must establish standards that your soldiers can work towards and must teach them how to achieve those standards if they are to develop.**

The NCO Evaluation Report

5-26. The Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Reporting System (NCOERS) is designed to –

- Strengthen the ability of the NCO Corps to meet the professional challenges of the future through the indoctrination of Army values and basic NCO responsibilities. The continued use of Army values and NCO responsibilities as evaluation criteria provides and reinforces a professional focus for the rating chain's view of performance. Over time, this results in acceptance of the values and NCO responsibilities, better performance and a stronger NCO Corps.
- Ensure the selection of the best qualified noncommissioned officers to serve in positions of increasing responsibility by providing rating chain view of performance/potential for use in centralized selection, assignment and other Enlisted Personnel Management System (EPMS) decisions. The information in evaluation reports, the Army's needs and the individual NCO's qualifications are used together as a basis for such personnel actions as school selection, promotion, assignment, military occupational specialty (MOS) classification, command sergeant major (CSM) designation and qualitative management.
- Contribute to Army-wide improved performance and professional development by increased emphasis on performance counseling. Evaluation reports provide the NCO formal recognition for performance of duty, measurement of professional values and personal traits and along with the NCO Counseling Checklist/Records are the basis for performance counseling by rating officials. Senior/subordinate communication is necessary to

maintain high professional standards and is key to an effective evaluation system.

5-27. To ensure that sound personnel management decisions can be made and that an NCO's potential can be fully developed, evaluation reports must be accurate and complete. Each report must be a thoughtful, fair appraisal of an NCO's ability and potential. Reports that are incomplete or fail to provide a realistic and objective evaluation make personnel management decisions difficult.

5-28. A single report should not, by itself, determine an NCO's career. An appraisal philosophy that recognizes continuous professional development and growth (rather than one that demands immediate, uncompromising perfection) best serves the Army and the NCO.

Professional Growth Counseling

5-29. Professional growth counseling is subordinate-centered communication that outlines actions necessary for soldiers to achieve individual and organizational goals and objectives. It is imperative for all leaders to conduct professional growth counseling with their soldiers to develop the leaders of tomorrow.

5-30. Professional growth counseling begins an initial counseling within 30 days of arrival. Additional counseling occurs **quarterly thereafter with an assessment at a minimum of once a month**. Counseling is a continuous process. Reception/Integration/Initial counseling must include goals/expectations for most current quarter along with long term goals and expectations.

5-31. During the counseling session a review is conducted jointly by the leader and soldier to identify and discuss the soldier's strengths/weaknesses and to create a plan of action to build upon strengths and overcome weaknesses. The leader must encourage, remain objective/positive, assist the soldier help himself and focus more towards the future. This future-oriented approach establishes short and long-term goals and objectives.

5-32. FM 6-22 (22-100), Appendix B, provides the necessary tools for the soldier to do a self-assessment based on performance indicators outlined in the leadership dimension. This self-assessment will assist soldiers in identifying their weaknesses and strengths and provide a means of improving their leadership abilities/skills. All leaders should use the performance indicators in FM 6-22 (22-100), Appendix B, as an assessment tool when counseling their soldiers. This will assist them in providing specific, precise and objective guidance to their soldiers.

THE COUNSELING SESSION

This is an example of a Performance/Professional Growth counseling session presented in four parts. It shows disagreement between the leader and led on the leadership assessment. This makes the counseling session difficult for both at first (each is a little defensive). SFC Lang has difficulty getting SSG Rovero to do an honest self-appraisal of his performance. The strategy in this situation is to provide SSG Rovero with clear examples of his leader behavior along with the adverse effects it is having on the soldiers and the unit.

SFC LANG: Come in.

SSG ROVERO: Sorry I'm late, SFC Lang. I got tied up on a job that's been running late.

SFC LANG: Have a seat SSG Rovero and let's get started. Do you have your self-assessment with you? *[This reinforces the expectation that all leaders will prepare a self-assessment prior to developmental counseling. This also is a good technique to try in order to get the subordinate leader to start with most of the talking]*

SSG ROVERO: I have it here somewhere. Yes here it is. You know, SFC Lang, after I finished reading my self-assessment, I realized, hey, I'm pretty good!

SFC LANG: You want to know the truth? You are pretty good, but... *[Here, the leader is trying to reinforce and recognize good performance even though it's clear the leader is not satisfied with some other aspects of the subordinate leader's performance]*

SSG ROVERO: Thanks. But?

SFC LANG: Well, like you said; you always seem to be running late on jobs.

SSG ROVERO: Well, some of the guys have been goofing off lately and I just haven't been able to get them back in line yet, that's all. *[There can be a tendency to place blame or identify causal factors that may or may not be beyond the control of the subordinate leader]*

SFC LANG: Well that's why we're here.

SSG ROVERO: What do you mean? *[The leader can expect that some subordinates will be pretty defensive when it comes to leadership assessment. It will be viewed by some as threatening]*

SFC LANG: I thought we went over this last week when we set up this meeting. What'd I say then?

SSG ROVERO: Something about assessing my leadership strengths; areas I can improve in...

SFC LANG: That's part of it. The focus is on developing your leadership.

SSG ROVERO: That's funny, Sergeant. I was a squared away NCO until I got here. Now, all of a sudden I've got all this stuff to improve on. *[Initially, leaders can expect to have many soldiers who have never received feedback on their leadership. As developmental counseling becomes ingrained in the Army, more soldiers will be comfortable and familiar with leadership assessment and development]*

SFC LANG: Well, leadership is a bigger part of your job now. Leadership responsibilities increase as you move up in the ranks. You've got a lot of attributes in your favor. Like I said, you have very good technical skills, but...

[Again, the leader reinforces the good performance while still trying to get the subordinate leader to admit and 'own up' to the shortcomings that need improvement]



SSG ROVERO: I run a good shop. Our supply room is always stocked – nobody ever has to borrow a tool from another company. And I go to bat for my soldiers. Like when Hennessey needed time to take care of some family business. I helped him with that. Right? Isn't that leadership?

SFC LANG: Yes, but that's not the whole story... *[SFC Lang has already mentioned she has concerns with SSG Rovero's leadership. She wants SSG Rovero to tell his side of the story and complete his self-assessment. Does he think everything is going well?]*

SSG ROVERO: Well, okay, maybe things in the shop aren't going as smoothly as they should be. And maybe it is my fault, but...

SSG Rovero realizes he could make some improvements in some areas.

SFC LANG: The way I see it, you act like you're still a mechanic instead of a supervisor. Every time I walk through the bays you're under some vehicle turning wrenches. But while you're doing that, who's making sure all the jobs in the shop are getting done? Sometimes these young mechanics we've got are just spinning their wheels. Maybe if you spent more time making the rounds and checking up on each job, we'd have a better OR rate. Plus we might be able to get out of here at a decent hour. *[SFC Lang knew this would probably be a sore spot with SSG Rovero. But, this is what the supervisor is observing along with the general effect it is having on soldiers and the unit]*

SSG ROVERO: I don't think that is what's really happening.

SFC LANG: OK, I've got several observations here; let's take yesterday for example. We had three HMMWVs deadlined with electrical problems. Those new soldiers, Harris, Jones and Wilson, worked on them all day and still

couldn't figure out what was causing the problem. Meanwhile, you're over with another HMMWV changing tires. *[SFC Lang did her homework. Observing and assessing is part of her daily activity around the motor pool. Specific observations of leader behavior along with the effects they are having on individuals, the unit and operational outcomes are key prerequisites to developmental activities]*

SSG ROVERO: Somebody had to do it.

SFC LANG: And are the HMMWVs up? *[Links behavior to outcomes]*

SSG ROVERO: We're working on it.

SFC LANG: And when did everybody finish and leave last night? *[Again this question links leader behavior to outcomes. SFC Lang asks SSG Rovero rather than tells him the outcome to promote ownership]*

SSG ROVERO: About twenty-one hundred.

SFC LANG: We have to agree on what's happening here.

SSG ROVERO: Maybe you're right, Sergeant. I need to work on my organizational skills. I'm not comfortable walking around with a list of jobs and checking up on people. I'd rather do it myself. *[It appears as though SFC Lang's detailed assessment resulted in SSG Rovero becoming a little more honest with himself. Given that SFC Lang also evaluates SSG Rovero, leaders can expect that soldiers might hesitate to admit to shortcomings]*

SFC LANG: I understand, but leaders have to learn how to assign tasks and supervise. That's the only way our soldier's will learn.

SSG ROVERO: OK, Sergeant.

Once they both agree on the assessment, both SFC Lang and SSG Rovero visibly relax. From this point on, the tone of the counseling session turns visibly positive and developmental as they talk about ways to improve SSG Rovero's performance.

SFC LANG: So what could you do to improve your leadership skills? *[Action plan development is a joint activity. The leader should refrain from prescribing developmental tasks unless the subordinate has no clue what to do or where to begin. Having the soldier identify the developmental task also promotes ownership and additional motivation to follow through]*

SSG ROVERO: I know I need to learn how to delegate tasks. I could prioritize the work that needs to be done and assign jobs based on experience. That way I could spend more time training and supervising my more inexperienced soldiers. *[This reinforces the concept that leaders should solicit the input of their soldiers and peers and include them in the decision-making process]*

SFC LANG: Sounds like you have a good plan. Remember, all your soldiers need your supervision. *[SFC Lang is making a subtle correction here to put a little more structure into this developmental plan.]*

SSG ROVERO: Thanks for your help, Sergeant.

MENTORSHIP

5-33. Mentorship, probably the singular most misunderstood word surrounding counseling and leadership. To best understand mentorship, it is best to first define it. Mentorship is a voluntary, developmental relationship that exists between a person of greater experience and a person of lesser experience.

Mentorship is not just a fancy buzzword. It is a proven approach and a valuable tool for NCO leaders.

“The experiences of the mentor when shared gives the soldier a comparative view to allow the soldier to develop and grow. The mentor is the sage old owl who has been there and done that and uses the experience to counsel wisely that young soldier.”

CSM A. Frank Lever, III

5-34. Note that no specific action is exclusively “mentoring.” In fact, the term “mentoring” is often used to describe a wide array of actions that outside of a mentorship relationship refer to the core of leader development such as counseling, teaching, coaching, role modeling, advising and guiding.

To be an effective mentor, you need the experience and wisdom of your years. You also have to care. If you really care about your soldiers, then you will devote the necessary time and attention to guiding them. Mentoring can take place anywhere. It is a key way to lead and to strengthen Army values.

DA Pam 600-25, “NCO Development Program,” 1987

DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIP

5-35. Mentorship is clearly a developmental relationship and noncommissioned officers have a mandate to develop their soldiers. Given that fact, shouldn’t all leader-follower relationships be considered mentorship? Or why confuse the issue by labeling as mentorship what is in the essence, good leadership? Why do we need mentorship? When those mandated leader development actions occur within a mentorship relationship, their potential impact is greatly magnified, both for the individual and for the Army. This increase in development is due primarily because of the high degree of trust and respect that characterizes a mentoring relationship. Simply put good leadership stimulates development; mentorship magnifies that development. See Figure 5-4.

*“One of the most important responsibilities of a leader is to train, coach and mentor subordinates... Some folks might maintain a relationship with an old mentor throughout their careers and use them as a sounding board and for guidance, but most people will have several mentors over their careers. Keep in mind that a **mentor** is not a substitute for personal research, personal planning, hard work and dedication to service.”*

CSM Larry W. Gammon

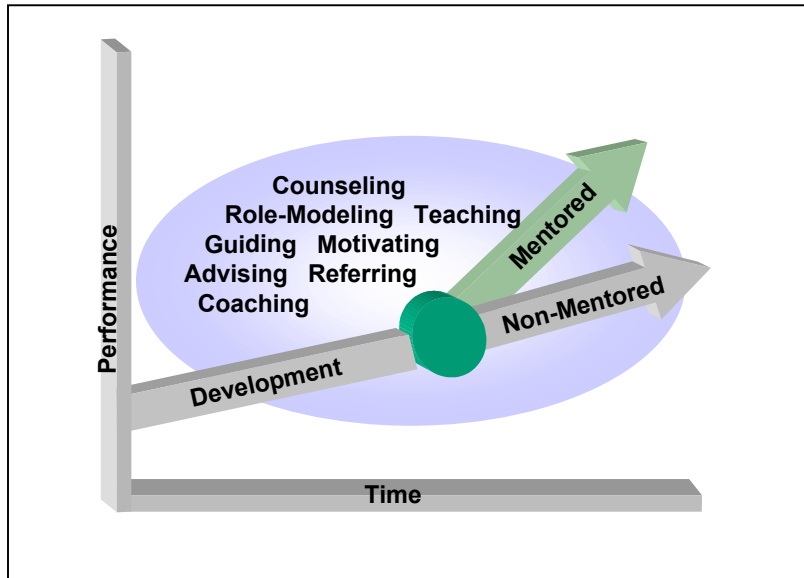


Figure 5-4. Mentorship Development

5-36. Mentorship can and will augment the natural development that occurs in leadership, but it is not necessary or practical in all leader-follower relationships. Soldiers will still develop if they are not mentored, but mentorship can be a key element in the development of soldiers, contributing to their greater well-being. We all have experience to give if we have the heart, the spirit and the caring attitude to share these experiences and the lessons we derive from them. Mentoring is simply giving of your knowledge to other people. To be an effective mentor, all you need is experience and the wisdom of your years and one other vital quality — ***you have to care!***

"Soldiers want to know what's going on. They don't want to reinvent the wheel to address problems that someone else has already solved."

CSM Cynthia A. Pritchett

SUSTAIN MENTORSHIP

5-37. Mentorship is demanding business, but the future of the Army depends on the trained and effective leaders whom you leave behind. Sometimes it requires you to set priorities, to balance short-term readiness with long-term leader development. The commitment to mentoring future leaders may require you to take risks. It requires you to give soldiers the opportunity to learn and develop them while using your experience to guide them without micromanaging. Mentoring will lead your soldiers to successes that build their confidence and skills for the future. The key to mentorship in the US Army is

that it is a sustained relationship and may last through the entire career of a young soldier and even into retirement.

5-38. While not a formal, mandated program like counseling, mentorship does have some very distinct characteristics that we can use as a guide for our mentoring. See Figure 5-5.

- Personal, voluntary developmental relationship existing between soldiers.
- Mentor is a close, trusted and experienced counselor or guide.
- Not bound by geographical location.
- Mutual agreement on mentoring relationship.
- Mentoring relationship devoid of conflicting interests.
- Common professional interests.
- Enduring relationship, frequency based on need, not predetermined event or time.
- Shared Army Values.
- Soldier may have more than one mentor over time.
- Two-way communications.
- Mentor must be willing to share professional knowledge, training and experience in a trusted and respected atmosphere.
- Mentor maintains confidentiality and trust.
- Sincere caring on part of the mentor.
- Relationship may be initiated by superior, peer, or subordinate.
- Can cross military, civilian, active or retired lines.

Figure 5-5. Mentorship Characteristics

“Soldiers can solve 98 percent of their problems by just talking to someone about them. All you have to do is listen.”

SMA William G. Bainbridge

NCO MENTORSHIP OF OFFICERS

5-39. Senior NCOs have a great deal of experience that is valuable to officers. An officer who has an NCO as a mentor is taking advantage of that experience and also of the unique perspective NCOs develop in leadership, training and professionalism. Even very senior officers seek trusted NCOs’ advice and counsel. A mentorship relationship that is unique in the Army and the NCO Corps is the relationship between a platoon sergeant and his young platoon leader. Especially in their early years, young officers need to be paired with senior experienced NCOs. The relationship that frequently comes from this experience tends to be instrumental in the young officers' development. Young

officers may forget a lot of things about their time in the military, but they will never forget, good or bad, their first platoon sergeant.



MENTORSHIP BUILDS THE FUTURE

5-40. Mentorship offers unparalleled opportunities to build a better Army. If you are a noncommissioned officer and are not mentoring several promising young leaders, you are missing an important opportunity to contribute to the Army's future. Mentorship is the single, easiest way to develop young leaders. But to do so, the mentor must be willing to commit the time and energy necessary to do it right and to set the conditions for success so young leaders will seek him out to be their mentor.

"Becoming a mentor should not be a hasty endeavor. It is not a part-time job. It is an intense relationship between teacher and student. The process requires time and caring. Effective mentors are totally committed to spending the necessary time and attention it takes to share values, attitudes and beliefs. This includes helping a soldier make career decisions and providing support and encouragement that allow leaders to grow."

CSM Christine E. Seitzinger

Near the end of the session, SSG Rovero starts taking charge of his action plan – identifying, without SFC Lang's assistance, things he can do to improve his leadership. As the session closes, there is a renewed air of respect and understanding between SFC Lang and SSG Rovero.

SFC LANG: Why don't you read back to me what you've got. *[As developmental sessions come to a close, it is important to review tasks and confirm what was said earlier in the session]*

SSG ROVERO: Okay. *[Making notes to himself.]* "Conduct an AAR with the maintenance section; observe Sergeant Leroy supervising maintenance operations."

SFC LANG: Those should both work to improve Executing. *[SFC Lang reinforces the leadership doctrinal framework by listing developmental tasks IAW with the value, attribute, skill and/or action it is designed to improve]*

SSG ROVERO: One I just thought of, "develop a daily plan for supervising maintenance operations." I think if I just sat down each morning and split up the jobs better, plus figure out where I'm needed most... *[This is an ideal outcome to be sought after in developmental counseling — the subordinate leader coming up with and identifying developmental tasks. Also note the total number of tasks identified. A few clearly defined tasks with high potential for improvement and are better than numerous, ill-defined tasks with questionable outcomes]*

SFC LANG: Sounds good. OR rate is bound to go up. And just think of what this is going to do to everybody's motivation around here – getting home at a decent hour. And I'll let Sergeant LeRoy know you're coming over to have a look at his maintenance operations. *[Again, the action plan may very well require action on the part of the leader, not just the subordinate leader. At a minimum the leader is going to have to plan and allocate time to get out and make subsequent observations of the leader to assess whether or not improvement is being made and perhaps conduct some on-the-spot coaching].* Well, Sergeant, we've had some pretty straight talk here on things that need to improve. And don't forget you've got a lot going for you. Best technical skill I've seen. Keep up the good work. *[Action plans are also about sustaining the 'good stuff.' In closing the session, SFC Lang is conscience of the need to reinforce and communicate what SSG Rovero is doing well]*

SSG ROVERO: Appreciate that, SFC Lang.

5-41. During the counseling, the leader and soldier conduct a review to identify and discuss the soldier's strengths and weaknesses and create a plan of action to build upon strengths and overcome weaknesses. This counseling is not normally event-driven. The discussion may include opportunities for civilian or military schooling, future duty assignments, special programs and reenlistment options. Every person's needs are different and leaders must apply specific courses of action tailored to each soldier.